IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-13 (Cancelled)

Claim 14. (Currently Amended) A method for achieving accurate machine reading of information on a tube, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a tube having a closed bottom, an open top and a cylindrical side wall extending therebetween, said side wall being concentric about a longitudinal axis, said tube having an alignment key non-concentrically disposed relative to said longitudinal axis;

prior to collecting ~~the~~ a sample in the tube, providing an array of information on said cylindrical side wall by use of a first apparatus such that said array of information is substantially parallel to said longitudinal axis and such that said array of information is at a specified angular position relative to said alignment key;

collecting the sample of a biological fluid in said tube; and

subsequent to collecting the sample, positioning said tube in a laboratory apparatus distinct from said first apparatus such that said alignment key engages an alignment structure on said laboratory apparatus, thereby allowing said laboratory apparatus to read said information on said tube from a specified angular position relative to said alignment key.

Claim 15. (Original) The method of Claim 14, wherein said alignment key is a substantially planar fin lying in a plane passing through said longitudinal axis, said method comprising the step of engaging said fin in a slot formed in said laboratory apparatus.

Claim 16. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 14, wherein said alignment key is a substantially planar notch extending into said tube, said laboratory apparatus comprising a planar fin, said method comprising the step of engaging said notch over said fin.

Claim 17. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 14, wherein said alignment key comprises a planar surface aligned at an acute angle to said longitudinal axis, said method comprising the step of positioning said planar surface of said tube against a planar surface on said laboratory apparatus.

Claim 18. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 14, wherein said array of information comprises a magnetic stripe, said step of reading said information comprising passing said tube in proximity to a magnetic reader for reading said information.

Claim 19. (Original) The method of Claim 14, wherein said array of information comprises a bar code, said step of reading said information comprising optically scanning said code.

Claim 20. (Original) The method of Claim 19, wherein said bar code is a linear bar code or a two dimensional dot matrix maxicode.